

# Paralympics New Zealand **Para Sport Terminology Guide**



## **Introduction**

Paralympics New Zealand (PNZ) has produced this terminology guide which is designed to assist with the language of Para sport.

We hope it proves valuable to you as we work together to achieve the Paralympics New Zealand vision of “through Para sport lives will be transformed”.

## **Paralympics New Zealand’s Intellectual Property**

Paralympics New Zealand is the National Paralympic Committee (NPC) for New Zealand and is the primary guardian of all International Paralympic Committee Intellectual Properties (IP) in New Zealand including all Paralympic terminology, plus the symbol, flag, motto, anthem, identifications and designations, emblems and the flame and torches.

Organisations that wish to use the Paralympic properties including use of terminology are encouraged to read this guide to gain an understanding of Para sport terminology.

To request consent to use Paralympic properties in relation to events, programmes, etc run by organisations, please contact Paralympics New Zealand.

For a full list of Para sports refer to [summer Para sports](#) and [winter Para sports](#).

# Guide to terminology usage

## Para sport based terms

Use	Instead of	Description
Para sport e.g. Para swimming, Para cycling (refer to page 6 for a full list of Para sports): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital P for Para</li> <li>• Space (no hyphen), then the sport name in lower case</li> <li>• In Shooting Para sport, the sequence of the words is reversed</li> <li>• Some disability sports do not include 'Para', but still follow the initial capital letter rule, e.g. Wheelchair rugby, Goalball, Boccia</li> </ul>	Para-Sport, para swim, disabled swimming etc	Para sport refers to all sport for athletes with an eligible impairment, whether they feature on the Paralympic Games programme or not. The International Federation must be recognised by the IPC and therefore operate under the IPC Athlete Classification Code.
Paris 2024 Paralympic Games Milano Cortina 2026 Paralympic Winter Games	Paralympic Games Paris Paralympics Paris	Formal full name of Paralympic Winter or Summer Games in the correct format.
Paris 2024 Paralympics Paris 2024 Milano Cortina 2026 Paralympics Milano Cortina 2026	2024 Paris Paralympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026 Milano Cortina	Informal name and format for Paralympic Winter or Summer Games. For informal or subsequent usage.
Paralympic Games Paralympic Winter Games	Para-Games Para-Olympics or Paraplegic Olympics Olympics	Non year specific games term. The Paralympic Games are separate to the Olympics.
Paralympics Winter Paralympics		Informal abbreviation for Paralympic Games. For informal or subsequent usage.
The Paris 2024 New Zealand Paralympic Team The New Zealand Paralympic Team	The Paris 2024 Paralympic Team	"Paris 2024" can be left out where the specific Paralympics doesn't matter, or where the specific Paralympics is clear from the context.
London 2022 World Para Athletics Championships	World Para Athletics 2022	World Championship event names have a capital on each word. They usually follow the format of city name, year, 'World', sport name, 'Championships'.
PNZ Para Cycling Programme Para Sport Manager	NZ Para cycling Programme Para sport Manager	Programme names are all in upper case. PNZ staff titles have a capital on each word.

World Para Athletics World Para Alpine Skiing	IPC Athletics IPC Skiing	International Federations names are all in upper case. They usually follow the format of World, following by the sport name.
Classification	Handicap, categorisation, etc	Athlete classification is a defining feature of Para sport. It is defined as grouping eligible athletes into sport classes according to how much their impairment affects fundamental activities for each specific sport or discipline.
Paralympics New Zealand PNZ	New Zealand Paralympics Para NZ Para Olympics NZ	The only acceptable abbreviation for Paralympics New Zealand is PNZ. Not to be used in headings to start sentences and only after a full version of the term has been used.

### Para athlete based terms

Use	Instead of	Description
Paralympian	Para olympian or Olympian	A Para athlete who has competed at the Paralympic Games.
Retired Para athlete	Former Paralympian Ex-Paralympian	Paralympian is a title for life, it is not removed after retirement
Para athlete Para swimmer Paralympic hopeful	Paralympian (if have not competed at the Paralympic Games)	A Para athlete is a person with an eligible impairment who participates in Para sport. Specifically, the term if used for athletes who have not yet competed at a Paralympic Games, or for amateur athletes. The International Federation of their sport must be recognised by the IPC.
Disabled athlete	Cripple, handicap, invalid, impaired, etc	These nouns all have negative connotations in the English language and should not be used
Non-disabled athlete or Olympic athlete	An athlete without a disability Able-bodied athlete	As per the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) guidelines.

Information on impairment is of secondary importance to a Para athlete's achievements, it is part of their story but it is not the only part and certainly not the main point. It should not be the focus of the item/article and must be a factual statement.

## Disability based terms

Use	Instead of	Description
Disability or specific impairment e.g. has an intellectual impairment, has cerebral palsy, has a spinal injury, is an amputee, has tetraplegia, etc	Suffers from cerebral palsy, handicap, etc Inflicted with cerebral palsy, handicap, etc	Disability is a statement of fact or refers to a medical condition. 'Suffering' portrays the individual as being in a weak, frail or tragic position.
A Para athlete who has a spinal cord injury or a Para athlete with paraplegia	A spinal injury athlete or a paraplegic	A person might have a disability or impairment but it does not define them as a person.
Wheelchair user	Is wheelchair bound	Terms like 'bound' or 'confined' should be avoided as they infer entrapment. Instead a wheelchair is an aid or tool, which a person uses.
Amputation or amputee	Stumps	Someone 'with an amputation' or is an 'amputee' are both correct terms. However, bear in mind that sometimes people have a similar impairment but not from amputation, it may be present from birth.
Non-disabled person	Able-bodied person	As per Human Rights Commission guidelines.

## Full list of Para sports

(Para has a capital P, but following words do not.)

Para sports - Summer	Para sports - Winter
Para archery	Para alpine skiing
Para athletics	Para biathlon
Para badminton	Para cross-country skiing (cross-country is hyphenated)
Boccia	Para ice hockey
Para canoe	Para snowboard
Para cycling	Wheelchair curling
Para dance sport	
Para equestrian	
Blind football (previously Football 5-a-side)	
Football 7-a-side	
Goalball	
Para judo	
Para powerlifting	
Para rowing	
Para sailing	
Shooting Para sport	
Sitting volleyball	
Para swimming	
Para table tennis	
Para taekwondo	
Para triathlon	
Wheelchair basketball	
Wheelchair fencing	
Wheelchair rugby	
Wheelchair tennis	

## Behaviour: Being with and around disabled people

**Assistance:** If you see a situation that you think requires it, offer assistance, but remember it will not always be accepted. Ask if an individual would like assistance before imposing yourself on them. Your help may not be required. However, don't feel awkward about offering to help, it is polite and acceptable to do so. If your assistance is declined on one occasion, do not be put off asking in the future. It is the same as if you were asking a non-disabled person if they want help – they might not.

**Communication:** Speak directly with the person rather than their companion, assistant or interpreter. Use your usual manner and tone. A physically disabled person does not necessarily have a hearing or intellectual impairment so be aware that you could sound condescending.

**Behave naturally:** For example, shake hands with a disabled person as you would any other person, even if they are wearing a prosthesis or have limited movement of their hand or arm.

**Everyday phrases:** There is no need to feel self-conscious about using everyday phrases. E.g., some people who use wheelchairs will state 'I'm going for a walk'. It is acceptable to say to a visually impaired person 'I'll see you later'. Everyday phrases of this kind are unlikely to cause offence.

### Behaviour related to impairment groups

#### If you are unsure of what to do in a particular situation, ask.

**Communication impairment:**

- Some disabled people have additional preferred methods of communicating – respect their requirements. They may need more time, use electronic devices, and require Braille or other tools to assist them in communication.
- For specific information, ask the individual. If this is unsuccessful, ask their permission to speak with their support assistant, parent or carer.
- Demonstrate what you mean if you are not getting the message across successfully verbally.
- Do not interrupt, correct, speak for, or finish sentences for them.

**Intellectual impairment:**

- If you are talking to someone with an intellectual impairment, always use simple, plain language and give them time to answer your questions. Tell the person if you did not quite understand what was said and ask them to repeat what they have said, rather than letting them believe that you have understood them.
- Do not interrupt, correct, speak for, or finish sentences for them.
- You may need to use more gestures/pictures if you are not getting the message across successfully verbally.

**Visual impairment:**

- When talking to a person who has visual impairment, identify yourself and others in your group.
- Provide verbal descriptions of visual things that are happening.
- Never pat or touch a guide dog while it is in the harness – just ignore it. The animal is working. Distracting it may harm its owner.
- Announce both your entrance and departure from a room.
- Let the person know if there is an obstacle that cannot be detected with their stick.
- When guiding a person with visual impairment allow them to take your arm.
- If you assist a person to a seat, guide them there and place the person's hand on the back or arm of the chair.

**Wheelchairs users:**

- Be aware that a wheelchair is part of a person's personal space. Do not lean on it or hold on to it unless offered permission to do so.
- Place yourself at eye level with the wheelchair user, by sitting down next to them.
- Do not patronise a person who uses a wheelchair by patting them on the head or shoulders.
- It is acceptable to offer to help guide the wheelchair or negotiate obstacles such as doors or steep inclines. Only push someone's wheelchair if they have requested your help.